Request for City Council Committee Action from the Department of Intergovernmental Relations

Date: February 5, 2014

To: Chair Elizabeth Glidden; Vice Chair Alondra Cano
Referral to: Intergovernmental Relations

Subject: Amendment to the 2014 City of Minneapolis State Legislative Agenda.

Recommendation: Approve the following amendment to the Agenda. On page 14 after the bullet on Air Quality insert:

- **Support legislation that provides cities of the first class to limited authority to impose reasonable restrictions on the use of pesticides for non-agricultural uses and require non-agricultural pesticides sold in Minnesota to indicate if they are pollinator friendly.**

Department Information

Prepared by: Gene Ranieri

Approved by: _____

Presenters in Committee: IGR Staff

Background

Importance of Pollinators.
Pollinators particularly insects (bees, flies, wasps, butterflies and other insects) are important for food production and plant reproduction. For example, approximately one-third of the world's food supply relies on pollinators. In the U.S. honey bee pollination of crops is valued at $15.0 to $18.0 billion while pollination of native bees is valued at $3.0 billion. In addition to pollinating food, honey bees also pollinate wild flowers.

Status of Pollinators.
Since 1945, the number of bee colonies in the country has declined from four million to two million colonies. Scientists like Dr. Marla Spivak of the University of Minnesota (U of M), believe that bee decline can be traced to the use of pesticides, the presence of pathogens and parasites, the loss of food supply such as pollen producing flowers and plants, and changing agricultural methods.

Studies by the U of M found that in every batch of pollen pesticide residue was present. Among the six pesticides was neonictinoid which is applied to many garden plants that are sold commercially.

In September 2013, three Minneapolis bee colonies were destroyed by a pesticide. The U of M Bee Squad analyzed the bees and concluded that fipronil, a pesticide used on building foundations caused the deaths.

The use of fertilizer and the planting of crops - corn and soybeans - that do not need pollinators has also led to the decline in bees and pollinators. As a result of the changing farming practices, bees have become rare in many farming areas.

Public Policy.
The 2013 Minnesota legislature included several provisions regarding pollinators in the omnibus environment, agriculture and natural resources bill (Laws 2014 Chapter 114). Chapter 14 directed the Minnesota Department of Agriculture to conduct a study that must include a proposal to preserve pollinator species diversity and a proposal to efficiently and effectively create and enhance pollinator nesting and foraging habitat in Minnesota. The study, which was released in January 2014, also was required to identify a process and criteria the Commissioner of Agriculture would use to perform special review of neonictinoid pesticides registered by the commissioner for use in the state.

The report can be accessed at
http://www.mda.state.mn.us/en/protecting/bmps/pollinators.aspx